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Excommunication of Mrs. Maria Townsend.



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THE BEQUEST OF
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EXCOMMUNICATION
OF
MRS. MARIA TOWNSEND,
FROM THE
COMMUNION OF THE BRICK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN
Beekman-Street, New-York,
FOR PERSEVERING DISBELIEF OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE
Eberlasting Punishment of the Wicked.
OR, RATHER,
FOR BELIEVING, WITH PAUL, THAT GOD IS THE
SAVIOUR OF ALL MEN,
(AS WELL AS)
SPECIALLY OF THOSE THAT BELIEVE.

——
Read 13th April, 1823, before the Society of United Christian Friends
worshipping in Duane-Street, New-York, by
EDWARD MITCHELL.

——

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1823

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FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
1918

EXCOMMUNICATION, &C.



Before reading the following documents, we beg leave to exonerate Mrs. Maria Townsend from having in any way desired or expressed any wish that they should be made public in this place.

It was the act of your speaker, and he takes the whole responsibility on himself.

While he does this, he will however state, that although Mrs. Townsend is the relative and friend of a very respectable female member of this church, and lived one year the next door neighbour to your speaker, during the time this case was pending before the Session, he observed a scrupulous delicacy not to interfere in the matter. It is true she once invited your speaker to an interview, and stated her difficulties on the subject of the final happiness of all men. Was she to blame for this? She had stated to her own minister, in an interview she had with him, her difficulties on the subject of endless misery; and, above all, she had gone to the Fountain of truth, the Sacred Oracles of God. She has weighed the contending sentiments in the balance of the sanctuary, and the result is, that the terrible doctrine of endless misery is found wanting.

We will now read the documents.



New-York, January 31, 1822.

REV. DR. SPRING,

SIR,

Some time has elapsed since our last meeting, which took place at your house, upon the subject of my differing in faith upon some points of doctrine from the church of which I had long been

a member. Since that period, I have searched the Scriptures with prayerful attention, I hope, with an eye single to the glory of God, and think I feel rather convinced of the truth than fallacy of the doctrine I at that time advocated. I am well aware that as I am not allied by faith, it is not proper for me to remain longer a member of the church over which you preside ; and if consistent, would solicit a dismission, rather than submit to a public trial, (which I am informed is expected to take place) and hope my name may be withdrawn, without giving offence, in love.

Although we now differ in some points, we are assured the time is coming, when all shall be taught of God, whom to know is life eternal ; when that glorious period arrives, we shall all confess **One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of all**. My mind has at times been painfully exercised on the reflection of being denied fellowship, and communion with the church, at a time when my heart was more than ever filled with love and gratitude to my Creator, for the manifestation of his love to man, and anticipated much pleasure in commemorating that love, which led the Father to send his Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Although I was not personally acquainted with any of the members, still I felt an attachment for them as Brethren ; but in the midst of these trials, the Lord has graciously supported me. On opening his Word of Truth, he has enabled me to feed by faith upon the bread of life ; he has pointed me to the **Lamb of God**, that taketh away the sin of the world ; on him I cast my care, for I know that he careth for me. I lately heard you preach a sermon on the atonement, the most of which was truly consoling. Your reasoning and proofs upon its extent and fulness, were unanswerable ; but when you endeavoured to show its limited application, I could not reconcile it with many scripture declarations—such as, “ He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for *ours only*, but for the sins of the whole world. Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of *all men*, (as well as) specially of them that believe. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject

to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope:—because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth (or every creature) and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, (believers) even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

These, and many other declarations, I think, go far to show, that the atonement will prove efficacious to all for whom it was intended; and that the purpose for which the Saviour came, will be accomplished. He says, "I came not to *judge* the world, but to *save* the world."—That he came to "seek and to save that which was lost;" and that he finished the work his Father gave him to do. The apostle tells us, that "while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." That "there is no other name given under Heaven, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus. Thou shalt call his name Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins." Are we not *all* his people by creation and redemption? (though not by faith.) "My people shall be willing in the day of my power. Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. The heathen thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth thy possession." The Psalmist, when exhorting all the earth to praise the Lord, says, "We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." Paul declares, "We are also his offspring." The apostle tells us, that "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. As in Adam *all* die, even so, in Christ shall *all* be made alive." It appears from these passages, that the free gift is as extensive as the offence. We read, "The grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared, (but not yet to all men) teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world."

The question naturally arises, Why are some brought to a knowledge of the truth, whilst others are left to their own blindness, and hardness of heart? Our Saviour was asked by his disciples, why he taught in parables; he replied, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of

the kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not," &c.—"Even so Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight," &c.—"As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence," &c. But, "have they stumbled that they should *fall*? God forbid." (I think Romans xi. throws great light on the subject.) "For God hath concluded them *all in unbelief*, that he might have *mercy on all*." Well might the apostle break out in this rapturous exclamation, "O! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Under these considerations he says, "I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service*." The apostle to the Ephesians says, "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, *even in him*; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ; in whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the *word of truth*, the *gospel of your salvation*; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

It appears that the mystery of God's will, *is*, that he might gather together in one *all* things in Christ, &c. He says, "After that ye heard the word of ~~truth~~, the gospel of *your salvation*, *ye believed*." The gospel of their salvation, was a truth as much *before*, as after they believed it; otherwise, faith creates the object of our belief. The record that God has given of his Son, is, that in him "we have eternal life;" (this is a truth,) if we believe it not, we make God a liar. 1 John v. 11. So long as we disbelieve this truth, we are in a state of condemnation; being ignorant of the things that make for our peace, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; and we suffer the misery consequent upon unbelief. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful." What if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid, yea, let God be true, but every man a liar:—no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost:—when the Spirit takes of the things

of Jesus, and shows them unto us, we shall believe his testimony. We cannot love the character of God until we *know* him. "He who loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. We love him because *he first loved us.*" Thus it appears to me. We read, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. But now, we see not all things yet put under him; but we *see* Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste death for *every man*. For as much *then as the children* are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself *likewise* took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage." It appears, those spoken of as being *all* their *life-time* subject to bondage through fear of death, were *unbelievers*; yet Christ came to deliver them.

I am taught that, "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." That "had there been a law which could have given *life*, verily righteousness should have been by the law. We are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." That "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." When we all like sheep had gone *astray*, the "Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all. That he *suffered*, the just for the unjust. His soul was made an offering for sin. He *was delivered* for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Therefore, "being *now* justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." (The knowledge of these facts gives us peace; or by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.) If I know my own heart, upon this foundation rests my hope,—the sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Redeemer. "Even the righteousness of God, *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified *freely* by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Where *is* boasting

then? What God hath cleansed, call not thou common" or unclean. Under a realizing sense of these truths, I am constrained to say, with Peter, "For as much then as God hath given unto them (the world,) the like gifts as he has unto us who believe on the Lord, what am I, that I should withstand God? Who hath made me to differ from those that see not the things that make for their peace?"

I know not that it is necessary to say more. What I have written appears to me to be truth. When I hear the *restitution of all things* spoken of by all God's holy prophets, (Acts iii. 21.) and the declaration of Jehovah to Abraham, saying, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;" and again, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth, righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, surely shall say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength, to him shall come," &c.; I am fully persuaded he is able to perform what he has promised, and that he will do all his pleasure. We are told, "*The last enemy shall be destroyed, Death*. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying, Death is swallowed up in victory. The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

How can I reconcile these consoling declarations with the doctrine of *endless misery*? If these sentiments be erroneous, my *understanding* must be convinced before I can renounce them. I have endeavoured to give a reason of the hope that is in me, I trust, with meekness and fear.

M. T.

P. S. Since writing the above, I have received a citation to appear before the Session on Monday, the 11th inst. which I decline doing, as I have written all I have to say, presuming this will be laid before the Session.

New-York, February 1, 1822.

MRS. MARIA TOWNSEND,

DEAR MADAM,

It has become our painful duty, as a Committee appointed by the Session of the Brick Presbyterian Church, to cite you, and we do hereby cite you, to appear before the Session of said Church, on Monday, the 11th inst., at four o'clock, P. M. in the Session room of said Church, to answer to the charge of *Persevering disbelief of the doctrine of the Everlasting Punishment of the wicked.*

The testimony to prove the charge, is your own confession.

Affectionately yours,

(Signed)

H. W. BULKLEY,
STEPHEN LOCKWOOD, } *Committee.*

New-York, February 16, 1822.

MRS. MARIA TOWNSEND,

MADAM,

I am directed by the Session of the Brick Presbyterian Church, to transmit to you the following extract from their minutes.

At a meeting of the Session of the Brick Presbyterian Church, Monday, Feb. 4, 1822.

The moderator laid before the Session a written communication from Mrs. Maria Townsend, dated Jan. 31, 1822, in which she attempted to defend the error she has embraced; acknowledged the receipt of the citation, but declining to appear personally before the Session, ob-

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serving that in this communication she had expressed to the Session all she had to say.

Whereupon,

Resolved, That Mrs. Townsend be, and hereby is, suspended from the sealing ordinances of this Church.

Resolved, That the case of Mrs. Townsend be referred to the Presbytery of New-York, for their advice.

I am, Madam,

Respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

H. W. BULKLEY,

Clerk of Session of B. P. Church, N. Y.



New-York, June 29, 1822.

MRS. MARIA TOWNSEND,

MADAM,

It has become my duty to transmit to you, the following extract from the minutes of the Session of Brick Presbyterian Church in Beekman-street.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

H. W. BULKLEY,

Clerk of Session.

At a meeting of the Session of the Brick Church, Beekman-street, held in Session Room, Friday, June 28, 1822.

The Committee in the case of Mrs. Maria Townsend, reported, That they had called on Mrs. T. and made a last effort to convince her of her error, and they regret to say, that their efforts were without any salutary effect.

Whereupon,

Resolved, That Maria Townsend be excommunicated from this Church, and that the first public annunciation of this sentence be made the ensuing Lord's Day.

Ordered, That the following minute be made in the above case.

Whereas Maria Townsend hath been, by sufficient proof, convicted of persevering disbelief of the doctrine of the everlasting punishment of the wicked, and after much admonition and prayer, obstinately refused to hear the Church, and hath manifested no evidence of repentance, therefore, in the name, and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, this Session pronounce her to be excluded from the communion of the Church.

Ordered, That the Clerk furnish Mrs. Townsend with a copy of the above proceedings in her case.

Memorandum taken by a friend of Mrs. Townsend.

The annunciation threatened in letter of 29th June, was made the day following, (Sunday) by Dr. Spring, from the pulpit, as near as my recollection serves me, in the following words—

“ It has become my painful duty, to announce that Mrs. Maria Townsend, a member of this Church, has for two years past, persevered in denying the doctrine of the everlasting punishment of the wicked, and has presented her children for dedication, at that place of *pretended* worship, where the doctrine is taught that the *wicked* will be saved as well as the *righteous*.”

New-York, Saturday, March 29th, 1823.

REV. DR. SPRING,

DEAR SIR,

As I am informed that a public excommunication is expected to take place next Sabbath morning, in consequence of my supposed error in faith, and fearing lest I should bring a reproach upon the cause of religion, in the eyes of those who are ignorant of the faith I profess, I feel it my duty to state a brief summary of the doc-

trine I believe to be taught in the Scriptures, requesting it to be read in the presence of that *public* before whom I am accused.

I. I believe in the fall, and total depravity of mankind ; also in their restoration through the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world,—the “ head of *every* man,” who tasted death for every man, and laid down his life, a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

II. I cannot, dare not, *limit* the mercy of God ; for it is written, I will not contend for ever, lest the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made, &c. Where sin abounds grace did much more abound.

III. I believe that he came to seek and save that which was lost. That the purpose for which the Son was manifested, was, that he might destroy the works of the Devil ; and I doubt not he will effect his gracious design. To Paul was made known the mystery of his will, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he would gather together in one *all* things in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth. I as firmly believe as yourself, that none will be happy until they are made *holy* ; when sin and unbelief, the source of all our sorrows, ceases, misery, of course, will not exist. I believe “ *there is no peace to the wicked.*” With the Psalmist, that “ the wicked shall be turned into *hell*, (a state of darkness and suffering of mind, as I understand) and all the nations that *forget* God.” Also, that “ all the ends of the world shall *remember* and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him. All nations whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name ; for thou art great, and doest wondrous things.”

In these divine testimonies I rejoice, *for which* I am doomed by the Presbytery, to undergo a public excommunication ! My name may be excommunicated by *men*, and stigmatized with *reproach*, in the eyes of the *world*, but the soul, secure beyond their reach, trusting in the promises of its Creator, remains unmoved,—to whose *unerring* wisdom I cheerfully submit my case.

I have no doubt *trespassed* on your time and patience, but as it is probable this will be my last communication, I hope you will bear with me ; and I conclude, by desiring that we may be enabled to see more clearly, and rejoice in the truth as it is in Jesus.

With respect,

M. T.

In the letter of the 10th of February, 1822, Mrs. Townsend is charged with "*persevering disbelief of the doctrine of the everlasting punishment of the wicked.*" And in a letter from the Clerk of the Session, dated June 29, 1822, informing her of the intended excommunication, he states, that a minute in the same words is ordered to be made. **WE DO MOST SOLEMNLY PROTEST** against this *mode of expression*; inasmuch as its tendency is to leave an impression on the mind of the hearer, that we consider *sin* a matter of *less importance* than the *Scriptures represent it to be*; whereas, we have ever zealously maintained, that *sin* is ever followed by a corresponding *misery*, and *holiness* by *happiness*.

Dr. Spring, at the time he excommunicated Mrs. Townsend, was in possession of her last letter, in which she says, "*I as firmly believe as yourself, that none will be happy, until they are made holy.*" And again, in the same letter, she says, "*I believe there is no peace to the wicked.*" This letter she requested to be read at the time of excommunication, but it was *not done*!

To the legitimate use of the word *everlasting*, (or *age-lasting*,) we can have no objection. But when we find that it is used in Scripture to designate the *hills*, which are to be destroyed in the great conflagration, and to the priesthood of Aaron, which, by the determinate purpose of God, came to an *end* nearly eighteen hundred years ago, we cannot believe that it necessarily implies an *endless* duration. It must ever be considered according to the nature of the subject with which it is connected; and we are yet to learn, that there is a single passage in the Bible, which by a fair and honest construction, taking its context in view, will support the doctrine of the *endless* misery of any creature.

In the letter from the Clerk of Session of the 16th of February, 1822, it is "**Resolved**, that the case of Mrs. Townsend be referred to the Presbytery of New-York for their advice." Whether this step has been taken or **not**, we have no evidence.

In the form of government of the Presbyterian Church of the U. S. of America, Book 2d of Discipline, Chap. 1. Sec. 3. we read—"An offence is any thing in the principles or practice of a Church member, which is contrary to the word of God; or which, if it be not in its own nature sinful, may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification."

Now the first letter of our excommunicated friend, is principally made up of quotations from Scripture; the remainder is made up of brief, but plain reasoning, which, we think, it would be much better to *refute*, (if it can be refuted,) than to *condemn*.

In the letter of February 16, 1822, from the Clerk of Session, it is "Resolved, that Mrs. Townsend be, and hereby is, suspended from the sealing ordinances of the Church."

In the form of government, under the head, Directory for Worship, Chap. 10. Sec. 2. it is said, "When any member of the Church shall have been guilty of a *fault* deserving censure, the judicatory shall proceed, &c. And in the 3d Section of the same Chapter, when the sentence of suspension is to be passed, a form is recommended, in which the offence is denominated *sin*. Sin is the transgression of the law, and is usually considered as the commission of an immoral act; but, thank God! there is not the shadow of a charge of the slightest impropriety of conduct brought against Mrs. Townsend; and if there had been any ground for such charge, can we suppose it would not have been made!

This accounts for the mild form of expression in some of the letters, respecting what is, no doubt, considered her transgression. It is called an *error*. But the form of government *speaks of offence, fault, sin*. Can an error of judgment, (allowing that she is in error,) honestly, and therefore innocently, entertained, be denominated *sin*? If so, then none but those who are infallible, are fit to be members of the Church: for an error of judgment, however sincerely entertained, is *sin*; and for *sin*, the party must be excommunicated. Mrs. Townsend believes, with the great apostle to the gentiles, that "God is the Saviour of *all* men." And because she so believes, she must be denied the privilege of obeying the commandment of her once despised and crucified, but now triumphant Lord and Saviour, who says, "Do this in remembrance of me." Any authority, that can forbid obedience to one commandment of the Redeemer, may forbid obedience to another, and to every other. Exclusion from the communion, is the greatest punishment that any ecclesiastical court in this country can inflict. Thanks be to God, the laws of our country protect us, in person, property, and character. We do not say that there is any disposition to injure us, where the law protects us. But we repeat, We rejoice, that there is no power; for the history of the world tells a sad story of what men, possessed of great power, have done, under the pretence of zeal for the good of souls; or under the influence of a zeal not according to knowledge.

We next notice the *contemptuous* language used in the annunciation of the 29th of June, where this house is called a "*place of pretended worship*." Who has a right (without evidence,) to call in question the

sincerity of another? This is not *argument*, it is *slander*! and the only excuse we can make for the party using it, is, charitably to hope, that it was *only* the effervescence of the moment, and not the result of calm deliberate thinking. Nay, we will be glad to find satisfactory evidence, that the friend who furnished us with this note, was mistaken in what he heard; and will give the same publicity to correct an error, as we now do to what we have reason to believe is the fact. One word more on *this* subject, and we have done with it.

Contrast *this sentence* with the mild and humble language of Mrs. Townsend, in her first letter to Dr. Spring, where she solicits a dismissal, and hopes that her name may be withdrawn, *without giving offence, in love*; and then say, in which of these do we find most of the spirit of our Redeemer? Which of these is the best practical comment, on the precept of Christianity, which enjoins upon us to let our moderation be known to all men?

We will now suppose that the party who has innocently entertained an erroneous opinion, doubts the truth of it, and finally thinks it best to give it up, and be restored to the church; How is this to be done? If we are to take the Directory for worship as the rule, we find, chap. x. sect. 7. that in the presence of the congregation, a part of the first question asked of the party desiring to be restored, is, "Do you, from a deep sense of your great wickedness, freely confess your sin, in thus rebelling against God, and in refusing to hear his church?" Now, if the error was innocently entertained, would it not be gross hypocrisy, to acknowledge it as a *great wickedness*, and rebellion against God? This would be the commission of a great sin, for the purpose of being relieved from the consequences of that which is no sin.

The second question is in these words: "Do you now voluntarily profess your sincere repentance, and deep contrition, for your sin and obstinacy; and do you humbly ask the forgiveness of God, and of his Church?" Can any man of common sense, and common honesty, repent of having continued to acknowledge that as true, which he esteemed to be true, though he now finds it to be an error? Sinful obstinacy in matters of faith, we think, must consist in maintaining as *true*, that which we have found to be *false*. Had Mrs. Townsend continued to maintain the doctrine of endless misery as *true*, after she found it to be *false*, she would have been guilty of sinful obstinacy indeed. She has chosen another and a better course.

The third and last question proposed, is, "Do you sincerely promise, through Divine grace, to live in all humbleness of mind and circum-

spection, and to endeavour to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, by having your conversation as becometh the gospel?"

We cannot see how this question will apply to any, but one who has been guilty of immoral conduct, disgraceful to a professor of religion, and neither of the previous questions speak of error in faith; but if they are so intended, why were they not more explicit? If they are not so intended, and members of the church are to be excluded, on account of errors *honestly* entertained, why is there not a form suited to the occasion?

We will not dishonour the thirty-six names signed to this book, by supposing that they intended, in a covert way, to do what they did not think it expedient to do *openly*; but should the charge be made, and we desired to take up their defence, we should consider it a Herculean labour; we would dread it as a hopeless case.

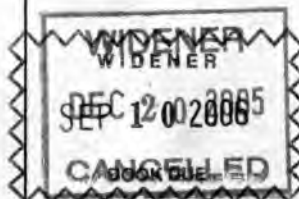
Lest we should be considered as moved by an unkind feeling, we solemnly and sincerely declare, we believe they were honest; but we think they have been unfortunate in this part of their book, in their mode of expression; and that on the subject of excommunication, their form of discipline, in the hands of men *loving power*, and despising moderation, might be made an instrument of great oppression.

We have dwelt longer on this last subject than we intended; but we fear there are many who unite themselves to a church, without a sufficient knowledge of its doctrines and discipline. Those who have given their bond must fulfil it; but we do hope that those who are yet free, will consider well what they are about, before they bring themselves into a situation, which may expose them to consequences they never thought of.

To conclude, Let us rejoice, that every view of religion, is, in our country left to stand or fall by its own merits. Of Dr. Spring, the pastor of the church from which Mrs. Townsend has been excommunicated, we know little, but by report; no disrespect is intended to him, or the people of his charge; we have no feeling towards him, or them, but sincere good will. We have heard of his zeal, and we only lament, that his zeal and talents are not exerted in what we esteem as a better cause, the cause of that God who is the "Saviour of *all* men, as well as, specially of those who believe" this divine truth. We, however, look forward with exultation, to the happy period, when he, and the people among whom he labours, shall with us see eye to eye; when we shall all unite in the praise of God, and of the Lamb, who hath redeemed us to himself by his own blood; when there will be no more collision of sentiment, when there will be one unvaried round of never ending harmony.



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